

Support of Independent Living Centers, WHY they Should Be Part of

The Governor's Biennial Budget!

Hello, my name is Fred Frank. If the name is familiar to anyone, you know that I have been an advocate for People with Disabilities and have worked for a better existence for People with Disabilities for over thirty (30) years. I started my advocacy working for the Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County as a Community Organizer. Our organization would assist and "Do With," or show them how to adjust in the community with their needs. After a short period of time viewing the outcomes that the Independent Living Center performed, I was convinced that People with Disabilities working on their own behalf was less costly to the state. People with Disabilities would rely on themselves rather than looking to the state for monetary assistance.

How do I know the Independent Living Centers work? I was riding down an elevator one afternoon and a man next to me said, "Aren't you Fred Frank?" I said, "Yes." He said that he wanted to shake my hand because I assisted his disabled son to get employment. I have many stories such as this that focus on the superior efforts of the Independent Living Centers. This is a reflection of all Independent Living Centers in the state. There are five centers throughout the state that provide information and referral, advocacy, skills training, peer support, community inclusion,

barrier removal, empowerment, and a host of other possibilities' for People with Disabilities

When Dannell Malloy was elected governor, I believed that People with Disabilities had a champion on their side and now the playing field would be level. It seems unfortunately, I was wrong! If funding for Independent Living Centers is eliminated and their staff are not in place to assist People with Disabilities, then the account I just mentioned that happened to me in the elevator will not be accomplished by the Independent Living Center staff.

It would be horrendous and a costly mistake, to the state and to the citizens of Connecticut to eliminate Independent Living Centers from the governor's budget.

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